(b) and (c) In March 2003, a decision was taken to cancel the 2305/2306 Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express *via* Patna and to increase the frequency of 2301/2302 Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express *via* Gaya from 5 days to a daily service. However, in view of representations and demands from various quarters, it was decided that 2305/2306 Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express will run as a weekly service and 2301/2302 Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express will run on 6 days a week as against a daily service decided earlier.

The resumption of 2305/2306 Howrah-New Delhi Rajdhani Express *via* Patna was *w.e.f.* 19.05.2003 and press notifications for incorporating the changes in the route, timings were notified in all the leading newspapers of Kolkata, Dhanbad, Ranchi and Patna on 14.05.2003 and 15.05.2003. Despite advance notifications some of the passengers arrived at Howrah on 25.05.2003 as per the timings printed on their tickets. Approximately 111 passengers, who missed the Rajdhani Express on 25.05.2003 due to change in the route and timings, were cleared/dispatched to their destinations by attaching one AC-2 Tier and one AC-3 Tier coaches by 231 UP Howrah-New Delhi Special train. The passengers who wanted to cancel their journey were given full refund at Howrah itself.

CAG's remarks on railway

1442. SHRI K. RAMA MOHANA RAO:
SHRI MANOJ BHATTACHARYA:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Comptroller and Auditor General of India in a report has revealed that the Railway Administration are not having complete and authentic records pertaining to the railway bridges in the country and that this is likely to hamper the monitoring work of repair and renovation of the railway bridges;

(b) if so, the Government's reaction thereto; and

(c) steps proposed to be taken in this regard so as to take up the work of repairing and, where necessary, rebuilding the bridges many of which are century old?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI BANDARU DATTATRAYA): (a) No, Sir. CAG has only observed that date of construction of some bridges is not available with some Railways and this may hamper their monitoring.

(b) and (c) The year of opening of line has been adopted as the year of construction of the bridges. However, rehabilitation/ rebuilding of bridges does not depend merely on the age of the bridge, but on the physical condition as ascertained during the inspection of the bridges for which, a well laid down multi-tier annual inspection procedure for each and every bridge exists. The distressed bridges are inspected more frequently.

All the old Cast Iron Pile Foundation Bridges and bridges with Early Steel superstructure have been sanctioned for rebuilding. All distressed bridges are sanctioned for rehabilitation/rebuilding each year as a continuous process.

Action has also been taken for modernization of Bridge Inspection & Management System as per details given in Para 2.4.5 of the White Paper on Railway Safety which has been laid in the Rajya Sabha on 07.04.2003. It is planned to make the existing inspection and monitoring systems more scientific as detailed in above para by importing modern technology for inspection and assessment of condition of bridges by using:-

(i) Under Water Inspections

(ii) Mapping unknown foundations and integrity testing of foundations.

(iii) Non-Destructive Testing Techniques like Ultra Sonics, Acoustic Emission, Strain Gauging and Radar etc.

(iv) Fatigue life and residual life assessment techniques.

(v) Modern Bridge Management System.

Pilot projects for items (i) to (iv) of above activities have been sanctioned. Purchase of Non-destructive testing equipment has been sanctioned for setting up of mobile testing laboratories over 9 Zonal Railways at a cost of Rs. 12.7 crores this year.